



The **NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY** is the central fire service agency in the State and is responsible for the development and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Code, public fire safety education programs and firefighter training programs. It is housed within the State's Department of Community Affairs.

For more information, visit the Division's website at:  
[www.nj.gov/dca/dfs](http://www.nj.gov/dca/dfs)

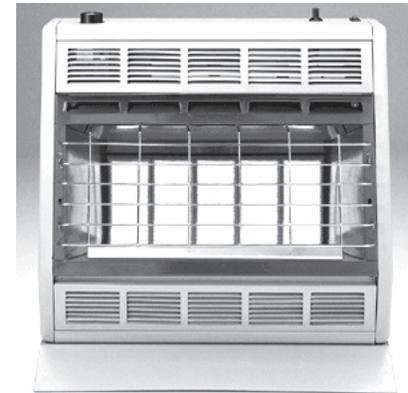


**NJ Department of Community Affairs**  
**Division of Fire Safety**  
101 South Broad Street  
PO Box 809  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0809

609-633-6106  
[www.nj.gov/dca/dfs](http://www.nj.gov/dca/dfs)

# Space Heaters

*How to Use Them Safely*



**Department of Community Affairs**  
Lori Grifa *Commissioner*

**Division of Fire Safety**  
Lawrence Petrillo, *State Fire Marshal*

Greetings from the  
**Department of  
Community Affairs**

As fuel prices rise each year, more and more residents of New Jersey are purchasing space heaters to supplement their main heating systems. As the use of these heaters increases, so does the potential for hazards. Small children, in particular, run the risk of being burned by the hot surfaces of space heaters, but everyone faces additional dangers when these heaters are used. If you choose to use a space heater this winter, take the time to install a smoke detector in the room in which you plan to use it. You'll be safer and warmer.

Of the most common types of space heaters, radiant electric heaters with no exposed heating elements are the safest to use. If you use a heater that consumes fuel such as kerosene, wood or coal, be aware that these fuel-fired heaters pose the additional threat of carbon monoxide poisoning, and should only be used in conjunction with a smoke detector AND a carbon monoxide detector. For a relatively small cost, these detectors can double your level of safety and provide greater peace of mind.

# Space Heaters *How to Use Them Safely*

## Wood and Coal Stoves

Wood and coal stoves can provide warmth, but they too can be dangerous if used incorrectly. Before you have a wood or coal stove installed, first obtain an installation permit from your local construction official and then secure the services of a qualified installer. Take the following precautions when you use a wood or coal stove:

- Use only coal in coal stoves, and only seasoned wood in wood stoves.
- Properly store your coal and/or firewood.
- Don't use lighter fluid or other flammable liquids to help start the fire.
- Place ashes in a suitable metal container and take outdoors immediately.
- Always use a fire screen and keep the stove door closed. Have your stove, its ductwork and chimney cleaned each year.



## Kerosene Heaters

Kerosene heaters are illegal in all but one- and two-family homes in New Jersey, and are completely banned in some communities. **Use kerosene heaters only where their use is approved by your local municipality!** If your town does permit them, remember that they can still be extremely dangerous if not used correctly. If you must use one, be sure to carefully observe the following safety rules:

- Use only clear (1-K) kerosene. Never use gasoline or any other substitute fuel.
- Always make sure the wick is set at the recommended height and the room is adequately ventilated.
- Store kerosene outdoors, in approved containers clearly marked "Kerosene."
- Always refill the heater's tank outside, and turn off the heater and let it cool before attempting to refuel (fuel hitting a hot surface could ignite).
- Fill only until the fuel gauge indicates "full."
- Use a protective cage to prevent children and pets from coming into contact with the hot surfaces of the heater.
- Never use any heater to heat food or water, or to dry wet clothing.
- Never attempt to move a kerosene heater while it is in use.

## Electric Heaters

- Don't buy an electric heater unless it bears the label of an independent testing laboratory and has a tipover switch that will shut off the current if the unit is knocked over.
- Position all space heaters far away from all flammable materials such as curtains, draperies, newspapers and magazines, shag rugs and clothing.
- Keep the heater away from water and do not touch it if you are wet.
- If the cord or plug is hot to the touch, shut off the heater and unplug it.



**GIVE  
SPACE  
HEATERS  
SPACE**

Keep portable heaters at least 3 feet (1 metre) away from things that burn - paper, bedding, furniture or curtains. Turn heaters off before going out or going to bed.

